

PROCEEDINGS OF THE HISTORIC CONSERVATION BOARD

MONDAY, APRIL 24, 2006

3:00 P.M., J. MARTIN GRIESEL ROOM, CENTENNIAL PLAZA II

The Historic Conservation Board met at 3:38 P.M., in the J. Martin Griesel Room, Centennial Plaza II, with members Senhauser, Bloomfield, Kreider, Spraul-Schmidt, and Raser present. Absent: Kirk Chatterjee, Sullebarger and Wallace.

MINUTES

The Historic Conservation Board unanimously approved the minutes of April 10, 2006 meeting, (motion by Spraul-Schmidt, second by Raser) with a correction.

CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS & ZONING VARIANCE, 1609 MADISON ROAD, WOODBURN AVENUE NBD HISTORIC DISTRICT

Staff member Adrienne Cowden presented a report on an application to rehabilitate 1609 Madison Road and install new fencing. The rehabilitated building will house the owner's automobile collection in the rear portion and office/retail in the front.

Ms. Cowden stated that the existing wood storefronts would be repaired, repainted and reglazed with clear glass. New eight-over-eight Marvin wood windows would be installed in the building's second story. Additional work would include repointing and painting exterior walls, salvaging and resetting the existing clay tile roof, repairing and/or replacing gutters, and installing a new rubber membrane roof. Additionally, three new openings will be cut in the east elevation and two existing ones reopened; they and an existing entrance on the south elevation will be infilled with glass block. A new insulated metal overhead door will replace an existing non-original garage door on the south elevation.

Ms. Cowden indicated that a new 8' minimesh black vinyl coated chain link fence and a metal picket fence with a gate will replace an existing 9' high chain link fence topped by razor wire.

Ms. Cowden stated that with the exception of glass block infill, the proposal met the Woodburn Avenue NBD Conservation Guidelines. She indicated that staff considered the new fencing to be appropriate for this specific property, given the need for security and recommended approval of the necessary Zoning Variance.

The conservation guidelines do not specifically address glass block. Staff reviewed Board decisions in other historic districts and found that glass block has been approved as a masonry infill on minor facades but not as windows. Staff recommended the Board deny a Certificate of Appropriateness for the proposed five glass block openings on the east elevation finding that the work does not meet the spirit or intent of the Woodburn Avenue NBD Conservation Guidelines.

Pre-hearing meetings were held on Wednesday, April 5, 2006 and Tuesday, April 18, 2006. Chris Kepes, project architect, and Greg Warner, HGC Construction, attended the April 5th meeting. Mr. Kepes, Ed Pfetzing, and Ken Segal attended the April 18th meeting. Mr. Kepes and Mr. Segal both voiced their support for the project. According to Mr. Pfetzing, the East Walnut Hills Assembly (EWA) also voted unanimously to support the application. Staff has not received any additional inquiries or comments from interested parties.

In response to Mr. Bloomfield, Ms. Cowden stated she had suggested that Mr. Kepes discuss other options, including reducing the number of openings on the east elevation or another type of sash, with his client. The concern for the client was securing the building, limiting view and admitting light into the building.

In response to Mr. Kreider and Mr. Raser, Ms Cowden stated that two openings were preexisting and three openings would be new.

Ken Segal, resident and Community Council member, stated that the uniform installation of the five glass block windows would be an improvement to the unattractive, patched brick wall along the east elevation. He stated that the glass block was best option for security and provision of light. He urged the Board to recognize the utilitarian function and design of the building and approve the Certificate of Appropriateness.

Ed Pfetzing, Vice President of the East Walnut Hills Assembly (EWHA), stated that the EWHA voted unanimously at their last monthly meeting to accept the installation of the five glass block windows. He also stated that he recalled specifically leaving out mention of glass block in the district guidelines when they were drafted last year. The purpose of this omission was to permit consideration of glass block on a case-by-case basis.

In response to the Board, Mr. Kepes indicated he had shown the glass block installed flush with the exterior wall, but would not object to a 1" inset.

Mary Ann Lee, President of the EWHA, stated that in her experience as a real estate professional, the installation of the five glass block windows on the east elevation would increase the attractiveness of the building and improve the marketability of the second floor retail space.

Mr. Bloomfield stated that it was appropriate for the staff to oppose the glass block but it was the Board's responsibility to make a judgment call regarding this matter. He stated that due to the issues of security and light, a compromise should be made to allow the installation of the glass block

BOARD ACTION

The Board voted unanimously (motion by Bloomfield, second Raser) to take the following actions:

1. Approve a Certificate of Appropriateness for the proposed new Marvin windows, repairs to the storefront, brickwork and roofing work finding that it meets the Woodburn Avenue NBD Conservation Guidelines.
2. Approve a Certificate of Appropriateness and the necessary Zoning Variance for the 8'-0" chain link and metal picket fencing finding that such relief will not be materially detrimental to the public health, safety and welfare or injurious to property in the district or vicinity where the property is located and is necessary and appropriate in the interest of historic conservation as not to adversely affect the historic architectural or aesthetic integrity of the district.
3. Approve a Certificate of Appropriateness to install glass block in five new window openings on the east elevation and one existing doorway on the south elevation, with the condition that the glass block be inset 1" in the openings, finding that the work:
 - a. Is on a secondary elevation that has been substantially altered and faces other commercial property;
 - b. Will provide an adequate measure of security for the building; and
 - c. Does not violate any specific provision of the Woodburn Avenue NBD Conservation Guidelines.
4. Final construction drawings and materials/product selections shall be submitted to the Urban Conservator for review and approval prior to construction.

**CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS, HILLSIDE REVIEW & ZONING VARIANCES,
442-444 MILTON STREET, PROSPECT HILL HISTORIC DISTRICT**

Staff member Caroline Kellam presented a report on an application for construction of two attached single-family rowhouses.

Ms. Kellam stated that the new construction would be on vacant lots at 442 and 444 Milton Street. The lots are situated on the north side of Milton Street and extending through to Boal Street, west of the Young Street steps. The properties are located within a hillside district and a RM-1.2 (Multi-Family) Zoning District.

Ms. Kellam gave a description of the proposed construction and explained that Zoning Variances will be required. The houses would be of brick and stone and be detailed similarly to contributing buildings in that streetscape and the neighborhood. Likewise, the new buildings will be sited as their neighbors with similar front and rear yard setbacks and heights.

Relief from the Zoning Code will be required for each building for front and side setbacks and maximum building envelope and for the construction of a retaining wall on the Boal Street side. Ms. Kellam explained that since this is a through lot, it has two frontages, so the proposed retaining wall is actually in the front yard facing Boal Street. Staff believes the new construction meets the guidelines for the Prospect Hill Historic District and that the zoning variances are justified to make the houses compatible with the district.

A pre-hearing was held and notices were sent to the Mt. Auburn Community Council and the Prospect Hill Neighborhood Association. There were no responses.

In response to Mr. Kreider, Chantelle Noble of Bracheer-Bolton Architects explained that the height of the retaining wall facing Boal Street would remain the same.

BOARD ACTION

The Board voted unanimously (motion by Kreider, second by Raser) to take the following action:

1. Grant a zoning variance from § 1405-07 Development Regulations of the Zoning Code to allow the following variances for 442 Milton Street:
 - a. Maximum building envelope of 45.75.
 - b. Front yard setback of 20'.
 - c. Side yard setback of 0.5 (side A) and 1.0 (side B) respectively.
2. Grant a zoning variance from § 1405-07 Development Regulations of the Zoning Code to allow the following variances for 444 Milton Street:
 - a. Maximum building envelope of 45.75.
 - b. Front yard setback of 32'.
 - c. Side yard setback of 0.79 (side A) and 1.89 (side B) respectively.

Finding that such relief from the literal implication of the Zoning Code will not be materially detrimental to the public health, safety, and welfare or injurious to property in the district or vicinity where the property is located and is necessary and appropriate in the interest of historic conservation so as not to adversely affect the historic architectural or aesthetic integrity of the district.

3. Approve a development plan to permit a front yard retaining wall along Boal Street for both 442 and 444 Milton Street that exceeds 8' conditioned on approval from the Department of Building and Inspections for site engineering.

4. Approve a Certificate of Appropriateness for the construction of two new single-family houses at 442 and 444 Milton Street as proposed.
5. Final plans and any revisions to be submitted to the Urban Conservator for review and approval prior to issuing a Certificate of Appropriateness and a building permit.

PRELIMINARY DESIGN REVIEW, 817 ELM STREET, 819-823 ELM STREET, AND 205 W. 9th STREET, NINTH STREET HISTORIC DISTICT

Staff member Adrienne Cowden stated the applicant and project architect had been notified of the meeting but were not present to discuss the project with the Board. Despite the absence of the applicant, the Board agreed to discuss the proposal and instructed staff to forward their comments to Towne Properties.

Ms. Cowden stated that Towne Properties has an option to purchase 817 Elm Street, 819-823 Elm Street and 205 W. 9th Street in the Ninth Street Historic District. Towne Properties was proposing to demolish three contributing buildings and construct a new multi-family residence. The new building will be four-stories high and contain 15 residential condominiums over ground floor parking.

Mr. Bloomfield stated that in some cases demolition and new construction are justified to attract new residents and businesses to the downtown area. Mr. Senhauser expressed concern that the owner had not fully investigated the possibility of rehabilitating the existing buildings for alternative uses – such as offices on the upper floors - or for evaluating the impact of historic tax credits.

Margo Warminski of the Cincinnati Preservation Association stated that she had seen similar buildings rehabilitated successfully in the downtown area. She stated that demolition is a final measure and should not be considered without sufficient documentation.

The Board agreed that the information provided assumed and sought to justify demolition as a first priority. While it did not reject the notion of demolition out-of-hand, the Board agreed that additional detailed information on a range of uses and treatments would be necessary to fully evaluate the application. Likewise, greater detail would be required for a final determination on the new design.

BOARD ACTION

Because this was a preliminary design review, no action was required by the Board.

ADJOURN

As there were no other items for consideration by the Board, the meeting adjourned.

William L. Forwood
Urban Conservator

John C. Senhauser
Chairman

Date: _____